

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

In 1995, Dolly Parton launched an exciting new effort, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, to foster a love of reading for preschool children and their families by providing them the gift of a specially selected book each month from birth to age five. Dolly's Imagination Library became so popular that in the year 2000 she announced that she would make the program available for replication to any community that was willing to partner with her to support it locally.

It's easy to bring the Imagination Library to life in your community. There are many available resources to help schools start a program which can be found at www.usa.imaginationlibrary.com on the [Imagination Library website](#).

Certainly, one issue that will need to be addressed in order to bring the Imagination Library to a community is adequate funding for the initiative. This document outlines some potential funding sources for communities and districts to consider when partnering to bring an Imagination Library program to their school.

Potential Funding Sources

- **Title I** – Title I is the largest federal aid program that provides financial assistance to districts and schools to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

There are two types of program options within the Title I law. Title I targeted assistance programs must target services to identified Title I students determined by multiple measures of performance. In a targeted assistance program, the funds can only be used to help Title I students.

The second program option is a schoolwide program where Title I funds can be used for services schoolwide and can help all students in the building. **Title I schoolwide programs could use Title I funds to implement the Imagination Library.** Schools need to have a poverty of 40% in order to operate a schoolwide program. However, under the new federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that was passed in December 2015, schools that do not meet the 40% poverty threshold may apply for a waiver. Therefore, all schools will now have the option to operate schoolwide. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) anticipates a significant increase in the number of schoolwide programs going forward. Therefore, in the future, many schoolwide Title I programs could choose to use their funding to support this literacy initiative to help young children develop a love for reading.

- Title I Parent Involvement Set-Aside – If a district’s Title I allocation is \$500,000 or more, then they are required to set aside 1% of their district’s Title I allocation for parent involvement. Only 5% of these funds may be used at the district level, 95% must be given to the participating schools. Districts must document on their consolidated application that they have reserved, at a minimum, the 1% for parent involvement and specifically outline how these funds will be spent. These funds could potentially be used to help support the Imagination Library program, again, if the school operates a Title I schoolwide program.
- Title IIA – Title IIA funds are designated for professional development and could be used to support professional development around literacy which could include the Imagination Library initiative. Although the Title II funds are only for professional development and couldn’t be used to purchase books, the funds could pay for professional development on literacy to kick off or promote the Imagination Library initiative.
- REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program) Initiative – These funds target small rural districts. Eligible school districts are allowed to combine the funding under the federal Title programs and can use these funds for any authorized activity. If a district is eligible, it can REAP funds into Title I to support the Imagination Library initiative. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program. Targeted assistance schools and non-Title I schools could take their Title II funding and REAP the funds into Title V to implement the Imagination Library.
- Transferability – These funds target larger urban districts. If a district is eligible, it can transfer funds into Title I to support the Imagination Library initiative. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program. Districts could transfer their Title II funds into Title V to implement the Imagination Library in targeted assistance and non-Title I schools.
- Program Improvement Funds – Schools in program improvement are eligible to apply for additional funds to help them make adequate yearly progress. Using these additional program improvement funds to support the Imagination Library initiative would be an allowable use of the funds in elementary schools that are identified for improvement.
- Small Rural Schools Achievement Program Funds through REAP – Eligible rural districts (most districts in North Dakota meet the rural definition) can apply for these additional funds directly through the U.S. Department of Education. These funds can be used for authorized activities under the Title programs and can support any of the supplemental activities under the federal programs, including the Imagination Library initiative.
- Reallocated Title I Funds – These funds are available to school districts that would like to add to their Title I program, but need additional funds to accomplish their plan. The funds must supplement your current local and Title I budget. These funds are made available in September and could be used to support any additional activity that will enhance services for Title I students. These funds could potentially be used to

help support the Imagination Library initiative again, if the school operates a Title I schoolwide program.

- Other Options
 - Gifted funds specifically for the program (e.g., gifts from community or business)
 - Granted funds specifically for the program (e.g., fundraisers)
 - Local United Way
 - Donations specifically for the program (e.g., organized donations from city)
 - PTO/PTA

Resources

- Additional information on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and a list of the current programs in North Dakota can be found at <http://governor.nd.gov/first-lady/imagination-library>.
- Additional information on applying for Title I and Title II/REAP reallocated funds can be accessed at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/FTP/FiscalResources/> on the department's website.
- Every school has a contact person assigned to them within the Division of Student Support & Innovation. Schools that are interested in applying but have questions on how to proceed should communicate with their contact person who can offer assistance. The chart identifying the contact person for each district can be accessed at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/SSI/ConApp/> on the department's website.

The Imagination Library is a valuable program that gets children excited about books and encourages reading at all ages. If this wonderful program is not yet offered in your community, or if you would like to keep it going, this document outlines several potential funding sources for districts and communities to consider. Working together, we can make a difference for the children of North Dakota.

If you have questions regarding the information in this document, please contact Laurie Matzke, Assistant Superintendent at lmatzke@nd.gov or (701) 328-2284.